

*Not in RSIM*

ADMIRAL TURNER  
ACCEPTANCE REMARKS  
VFW

Dallas, Texas - 21 August 1978

Americanism Gold Medal

On behalf of all of the men and women of the Central Intelligence Agency, I accept this distinguished award. I cannot tell you how heartwarming it is for us to have this public recognition of the importance and the quality of the work that we do on behalf of our country. I happen to believe that good intelligence is more important to the security of the United States of America today than perhaps any time in its history. (Applause)

Today we live in an era of detente; an era of increasing interdependence, economically and politically. Under these circumstances, what happens in foreign countries has a greater bearing than ever before on the security and on the standard of living in our country. Our policy makers and our top decision makers need good information about what is going on in the rest of the world. That is the job of intelligence.

I am sorry to have to report to you how much of our effort in the Central Intelligence Agency today is devoted not to collecting good intelligence, but simply to defending ourselves against false accusations. Therefore, I am pleased to accept your recognition today.

We, in the Central Intelligence Agency, are serving our country honestly and well. I submit that it is time this country stopped looking on every public servant as suspect and accepting every renegade whistle blower as a hero. (Applause.) We, your public servants, are here to serve you and serve you well. We need the kind of trust and confidence that you have displayed in us today. I assure you we will not let you down. Thank you.

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DCI LUNCHEON ADDRESS

Dallas, Chamber of Commerce  
Navy League, Army & Air Force Associates  
21 August 1978

I really appreciate this certificate from the City of Dallas, although I am going to have a very difficult time on October 2nd in Washington, D.C., when there is one of those Redskins/Cowboy games. Seriously, I am very grateful for this opportunity to talk to you a little today about the state of American intelligence. Anyone who knows Dallas knows how interested, how concerned all of you here are with the state of national security in our country. Our intelligence capability is one of the cornerstones of our national security. I happen to think that good intelligence is more important to our country today than perhaps ever before in its history. Today we are in an era of detente, of military parity, and of increasing economical and political interdependence between nations. In these circumstances, more than ever before, the activities in foreign countries bear a direct impact not only on our security but on our well-being, our standard of living. It is therefore, more critical than before that we be able to inform the decision makers of our country of what is going on in foreign lands. Yet, as you well know, many of those countries are closed societies. They don't open up their doors and tell you what they are doing and you can't easily devine what they are likely to be up to next. You have to count on good intelligence to get you that information.

I would like to talk to you about several things we are doing today to improve our intelligence capability in this country and to adapt it to these changing demands and requirements. First, I would like to look at the ways in which we go about collecting intelligence information; gathering the data which is the substance of intelligence. Basically, there are two ways in which you gather intelligence. One, is the traditional, human intelligence agent. The spy. The other is the new technological means of collecting information: basically, photographic or the intercept of signals going through the air. Now, sophisticated American technology in recent years has given us new capabilities that give us a real advantage in the field of intelligence. Yet, I would point out to you that what photographs and signals tell you in general terms, is what happened in some countries yesterday and whenever I give information to our decision makers, based on technical intelligence collection, they usually turn to me and say, why did that happen and what is going to happen tomorrow? Well, divining their intentions, understanding their hopes, their aspirations, their plans, is a forte of the traditional human intelligence agent. So the issue today is not one of whether we want more emphasis on technical collection, or human collection, but how we bring them together; how we bring all the collection capabilities in our country together using team work.

We have a large intelligence structure--it is spread over a number of agencies and a number of departments of government--and it is a challenge to bring about that right teamwork. As a result, in January of this year President Carter signed a new Order giving me, as the Director of Central Intelligence--a capacity in which I am charged to coordinate all our intelligence agencies as distinct from my role as the head of the Central Intelligence Agency--giving me authority to take charge of the collection effort of all these diverse groups. This is important, because it is in this collection function that there are large expenses and considerable risks. We want to be sure that we do not duplicate. We want to be equally sure that we don't have gaps, we don't have areas in which nobody is doing what needs to be done for our country. These new authorities will be helpful in that respect. Carefully, however, the President's order did not get into the other half of intelligence because collection is only the beginning.

The other part is interpreting, analyzing, understanding what you have learned by collecting data. It is very seldom that any piece of intelligence data is so conclusive that everyone will agree on its meaning, its interpretation. And, therefore, we want and encourage divergent, interpretive activities. we have analytic agencies in the Department of Defense, in the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, the Department of Treasury, the Department of Energy, and the President's order

encourages that diversity. I do not have authority to tell them how and what to analyze and what conclusions to come up with. We want to be sure that the decision makers are constantly given different views and not stuffed with the same old assumptions or perhaps the same mistakes as before. This is particularly important to us today, because the scope of intelligence requirements is expanding markedly. Look back perhaps 30 years to the time when we first began to have a central organized intelligence activity. Back then the primary focus, the main product of all of our intelligence was knowledge about Soviet military capabilities. That was the primary threat and that was where our intelligence agencies focused their efforts. Look at how the world has changed since then. Today we have relationships with almost all the 150-some countries in the world. Our relationships with the vast majority of them are far more economic and political than they are military. Therefore, we are being challenged today to expand our geographical and our topical interests, to be able to give advice and information in a much wider sphere of activity.

Now let me not overstate the case to you. The number one concern of American intelligence is, and must remain what is going on in the Soviet military sphere. What I am saying to you is that today we are being challenged to expand to take in new areas of expertise, new academic disciplines, and new scopes

of interest. Today we have to predict the grain harvest in the Soviet Union, we look at the labyrinth of structure around international drug trafficking, we look at the psychology of international terrorism, we try to predict trends in international economics, we even try to make medical prognostications on major leaders of major countries abroad. It is an exciting, and a different challenge. We have to do all this today in quite a different environment than we have experienced in the past.

If you look back, maybe 5 or 10 years, I think it improbable that a Director of Central Intelligence would have been here speaking to you as I am privileged to do today. He would not have accepted your invitation, you probably would not have extended it. Intelligence was just not in the public view, it was looked upon as a very secretive matter. What has happened? Vietnam, Watergate, have virtually propelled intelligence in this country into the headlines. There have been accusations after accusations; investigations after investigations; stories after stories, and what wasn't covered by everybody else has recently been put out in books by renegade intelligence officers. The result is that we must today perform our intelligence function in a much more open manner than has ever been done before in the history of the world. Well you might ask, can you be open--more open than ever before and still be effective? I think the answer to that is yes.

Not in spite of, but because of this openness. Being open is basically being American and by being open I believe that we can gain certain strengths for our intelligence activities.

First, let me state my deep conviction that no agency of our government can thrive over the long run if it does not have the support of the American people. Now, during the past our intelligence activities had full support of the American people. They had it on faith, they had it on an inherent public understanding that you didn't talk much about this basically secretive activity. The investigations, press coverage, the allegations of these recent years, however, have destroyed that sense of faith. When we were accused, sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly over the past several years, of abuses of intelligence the public had no basic understanding of how valuable the contribution of intelligence had been over the years so that it could compare that with the allegations and come to a judgment. So today we are hoping to earn greater public support. How? Well, we are out making more speeches. We are also answering inquiries from the media, bright lights and all. We still find it, of course, frequently necessary to say "no comment" to the media, but our needle simply isn't stuck in that groove anymore. Finally, we are also publishing more, publishing more of our product for the American public to read.

Let me emphasize at this point that what I have been describing to you: speeches, media responses, publications, are controlled responses by responsible authorities. We aren't



simply opening up the door and saying to any intelligence officer, you may walk out in the street and say anything you feel is worth saying. Clearly, the bulk of what we do must be kept secret. The problem is epitomized by the way we approach this issue of publishing that I mentioned to you. What we do is when we publish within the classified structure a new study, a new estimate, we look at it and say to ourselves, if I took out of that everything that really must remain secret, would there be enough left to be of real value to the American public. If there is, we go ahead and publish. And we hope that that is helping the American public, by making information available that would otherwise remain classified and thereby helping to improve the quality of debate in our country on important topics. We also happen to think that this kind of publication also helps us, because it provides us the benefit of outside comments and criticism.

For instance, just a little over a year ago we published a major study on the world energy outlook. The essence of that study was that in five to eight years, in our view, the world as a whole is not going to be able to get out of the ground as much oil as it will want to consume on top of the ground. We are not saying there are not adequate reserves underneath, we are saying that sheer pumping capacity will not meet the total needs, the total demands, of the countries of the world and, therefore, there will be a crunch on prices or other adverse impacts. Now when we published this it was not universally accepted. There were a lot of people who criticized in the

press, on television and elsewhere. I wrote to each of them and I said please detail your comments, your criticisms to me, and those who did I invited to come to the Central Intelligence Agency and spend a day in discussion with our experts. It was very valuable to us, I hope to them also. But that interchange, that dialogue made us sharpen our understanding, made us defend our case in an even better way. Let me also suggest that greater openness that we are seeing today is also helpful to us in preserving our secrets. If that sounds like a contradiction, it is not. Why? Because one of the problems in keeping secrets today is that there are too many of them. And by releasing as much as we can to the public we hope to reduce that corpus of secrecy. What we do, is we say to ourselves can we increase the respect for the Secret label by having fewer of these secrets. Today an individual looks at a classified document and it says on the cover confidential, or secret, or destroy before reading, and he sees so many of those labels and he feels so much of it is not really necessary, that he loses respect. I would assure you that maintaining respect, maintaining integrity of the classified system of our government is a major problem before our country today.

It appears to me that college students almost all aspire to go into journalism for their fame and fortune; and within journalism it is investigative reporting that is important today. Now there is nothing wrong with investigative reporting and those most famous investigative reporters, Woodward & Bernstein, did a

great service to our country. But at the same time, I would suggest to you that when our country comes to look upon almost every public official as suspect, and almost every renegade whistle-blower as a hero, when we come to focus more on criticizing and tearing down than on being constructive and building up, we are in for difficulties. Yes, there have been too many secrets, there are too many secrets in our government. Yet, secrets are in themselves neither good nor bad, moral nor immoral. We all have secrets in our personal lives, in our businesses, and in our government. Especially in intelligence sections of our government. The issue with government secrecy is how do we make sure that that privilege is not being abused in order to cover up. Out of the crucible of the last three years of intense criticism of intelligence, we are today forging a new set of oversight mechanisms to provide assurance against such abuse. Let me describe them to you.

I call them surrogate public oversight. Surrogate because the public cannot know everything that goes on in intelligence, but we can let others know on behalf of the public and let them conduct the oversight where the public cannot. Who are the surrogates. Well, first there is the President and the Vice President. They take a very active, keen interest in everything that is going on in the intelligence world today. I am privileged to report to them personally weekly and I get clear

and explicit guidance from them. Secondly, we have something known as the Intelligence Oversight Board. It consists of three distinguished citizens: Former Governor Scranton, former Senator Gore and an Attorney, Mr. Tom Farmer, of Washington, D.C. These three gentlemen have only one mission in their work as an intelligence oversight board and that is to oversee the legality and propriety of the intelligence activities of our country. Any of my employees may report to them directly around me; you may write to them and say you think something is being done improperly. They will look into it and report only to the President of the United States. And finally, in the last two years there has been created in each chamber of our Congress a committee dedicated solely to the oversight function of intelligence. These two committees and today, in my view, performing splendidly. They give me advice, they give me counsel and they are very useful in supporting me, but at the same time they are very rigorous in insuring that if there is any sign of mal-performance they conduct their own investigation publicly. All this I believe gives the public a much greater assurance today than ever before, that American intelligence activities are being conducted in a way which the public would basically support.

Oversight also has another interesting by-product of great value to me personally. This is the value of having accountability when you are trying to manage a large organization. Particularly in something as secretive as intelligence, it is important to

have accountability. People can often get carried away with dedicated enthusiasm and take risks that are perhaps not worth taking. But with each one of them, my subordinates' know that if he and I are likely to be called up before an oversight mechanism to justify, to explain, why we have done what we have done, it really helps one's managerial control. Let me not overstate the case again. There are, of course, risks in this oversight process. First, there is the risk of leaks; the risk that the more people who know a secret the more likely it is to leak out. It doesn't make any difference in my opinion who the people are, it is just a pure numerical function. The second risk is the risk of overmanaging. As oversight boards and bodies get into overseeing they tend to get into increasing detail and pretty soon they are managing and not overseeing, if they are not careful. What we must derive is a proper balance between adequate oversight to give reassurance and not so much oversight as to hobble our intelligence activities. I believe we are moving very, very well in that direction today. We are not there yet. It is going to take another year or two, I believe, to iron out this balance and ensure that it is the proper one. One of the big steps in that will be passage by the Congress of what they call Legislative Charters for our intelligence activities. These are under debate today, I don't think they will be passed by the Congress in this session. I am very hopeful that they will be next year.

Overall, is it really worth it? Is it worth it for this openness and this oversight? Yes, I believe so. I believe the benefits counterbalance the risks. The benefits of greater public support, of better protection for our secrets, of better management control, and for greater assurance to the American public that what we are doing is in conformance with American standards and in full support of American foreign policy. What I am really saying to you today then, is that there are two new basic trends in American intelligence. A trend on the one hand for greater openness and oversight, the trend on the other hand for the wider scope of material that we must absorb, analyze and present to our decision makers. It is important, exciting, challenging, I think an historic moment in American intelligence because what we are really doing is evolving new model of intelligence, a uniquely American model of intelligence, one designed in conformance with the basic standards and values of this country and yet designed also to ensure that we can maintain those capabilities for collecting and interpreting information that are so critical to our decision makers today. I assure you that we are the best in the world in intelligence today. I assure you that I believe under these new procedures we can be even better, and I certainly intend that we are going to stay on top.

Thank you.

## Questions and Answers

Dallas, Chamber of Commerce  
Navy League, Army & Air Force Associates  
21 August 1978

- Q: In the light of that introduction, I might also say that I was the State Department advisor at the Naval War College which Admiral Turner commanded. Sir, I would like to ask you a question which perhaps goes more to your broad Navy background than it does just to your intelligence responsibility, although it obviously applies to both. In view of the U. S. commitment to relinquish control of the Panama Canal Zone on January 1st of the year 2000; it is likely that communist Castro Cuba will make increasing demands that the U.S. agree to give up its base rights on Guantanamo Bay. If that should happen, how would you expect the U.S. to react? And even from the symbolic standpoint, if not the substantial standpoint, does Guantanamo have importance to us.
- A: Mr. Ambassador those are excellent points. They somewhat tend to drag me into the realm of what our policy should be and I would like to emphasize that one of tenants of being an intelligence officer, sometimes difficult for a chap who has not also been one, is to forswear participating in the policy process. The point being that if the intelligence information I provide to our policy makers is viewed as biased or advocating a policy line that I happen to support, clearly it is of less value. So, we try very hard to stay out of policy matters, such as whether we should give Guantanamo. At the present time we see no demand from Cuba for relinquishing Guantanamo, though one certainly knows it continues to be a thorn in Castro's side. I see no great movement at this time on the part of Castro to try to reach any kind of accommodation that would lead to better relations with the United States, particularly because of his very rampant activities as a surrogate for the Soviet Union throughout Africa.
- Q: I would like to ask a question about one of the renegade Agency men. I read in the newspaper about Agee, who released a book which had 600 to 700 names of purportedly CIA workers. I wonder what damage that causes and can you comment on how accurate the book is? Why don't you release the names of a 1,000 KGB agents?
- A: I do not comment on how accurate Mr. Agee's book is because in doing so we might enhance its value. His book is very, very damaging to our country and to the press. One, it takes an intelligence officer of great value and puts his life at risk.

As you well know, we think possibly because of earlier revelations of Mr. Agee, in 1975 we lost one of our chief intelligence officers who went out in the street and was murdered. Secondly, put yourself in the shoes of the courageous, wonderful young men and women who undertake to be intelligence officers in the Central Intelligence Agency today. They dedicate themselves to a life of anonymity and must live abroad and must not be acknowledged as working for the CIA, work hard and get very little credit for it. Yet, 5, 10, 15 years after they commence this set of sacrifices, a man like Agee comes along and blows their cover. They are then of much less career value to us. Their career after years of sacrifice has been markedly cut off through no fault of their own. It is a very heart-rending thing for our people to have to suffer these provisions in the cause of becoming good intelligence officers. We hope something can and will be done to make it a criminal penalty in this country to disclose the names of our intelligence people.

Q: You mentioned the Legislative Charters. Would you elaborate a little more on that and explain. If you're advocating that the CIA needs it, maybe we can help with our local representatives.

A: Thank you, yes. The CIA has always had a charter. It is known as the National Security Act of 1947 and then in 1949. It lays out what the Central Intelligence Agency is chartered to do and what are some of the restrictions on it and how it does it. What we are encouraging today, what the administration has supported and the Congress has supported as the result of the Church Committee and other investigations, is a cleaner set of Charters for the entire intelligence community: the Department of Defense activities, as well as the CIA, for instance. I strongly support this move. Now, I want to support it if the charters are workable, that they don't hobble us and we are working on that now. The dialogue is going on between the public and the Congress, between those of us in intelligence and the Congress. I am very pleased with how it is proceeding. I can't guarantee that it is going to come out. I say, it is moving in the right direction. Your support, your understanding of it with your representatives, will be important over the next year or so, as the final details which we have started, get ironed out. But the Charters' role on the one hand give us the authority to do what we do, that is very important. Secondly, they will spell out rules and regulations about what we cannot do. But when you are intelligence officer out in the field where you don't get minute-by-minute supervision, having some clear standard, some clear rule by which you are authorized to work is a very important thing. Otherwise you put an undue load on those people in making judgments that they have to make every day. So, yes we are in favor of these. We must find a new charter as a compromise between such detailed regulations in which we are hobbled and can't do our job, and enough guidance that we get the support.



Q: (Inaudible)

A: I have no evidence of that at this point--that we think only in terms of tactical, biological and chemical warfare to the best of my knowledge. Down below is it likely? My personal feeling is no, that those dangers are too difficult to administer on that large a scale. It is a very formidable, technical problem.

Q: Could you tell us, in this gathering if there has been any indication of any diminution of cooperation of nationals within their own countries cooperating with the CIA since we have come under the oversight committees.

A: There has been a diminution of cooperation with all of our intelligence agencies by foreign individuals and by foreign liaison services. I don't attribute it particularly to the oversight process, I attribute it to the unauthorized disclosures we have had in the press and in books by these renegade intelligence officers. When a foreign individual who is willing to stick his neck out on behalf of the United States of America has to be concerned that his name may appear in the press tomorrow, he is less likely to be cooperative with us. We have seen no leaks of that sort that have come out of the intelligence oversight process at this stage, but we do see increasing numbers of articles in the newspapers, books being written that disclose information that does make these people very wary. As I said in my remarks, one of our major problems today is security of our classified information, we must hang on to it as the years go ahead.

Q: Admiral would you comment on the relationship of the Central Intelligence Agency to the law enforcement and intelligence the gathering devices of the States of the various states and even any comments you might see appropriate matters even to localized matters such as the Dallas police department. Do you have an interface with them and a direct relationship with them?

A: No we do not. We are a foreign intelligence service. The FBI is our domestic intelligence and law enforcement service and our relationships with local law enforcement agencies are properly through the FBI. I am very pleased to report to you that we have a most cooperative and good coordination between the FBI and the CIA today. Unfortunately, it was not always thus in the past, but it certainly is today. I am privileged this afternoon to have my college roommate from Amherst College here at this table here over in the front. And it also happens that another member of our college class back in 1941 at Amherst College in Massachusetts, is Bill Webster of the FBI and that makes it very easy for me to get together with him.

Q: What can American intelligence do to counter Cuban activity in Africa?

A: The best we can do is to try to keep our decision makers and to the extent we can the public, well-informed of what the extent and nature of that Cuban activity is. Also, in what is known as the covert action business. This is not intelligence. Covert action or political action is the attempt to influence events in foreign countries. There was a time in the past when the CIA was engaged in this in Africa. Today any time a political action is to be accomplished by the Central Intelligence Agency, it must be cleared by the National Security Council, the President must sign an authorization for it, and I must send those by the appropriate committees of the Congress. In short, it is not an option for the Central Intelligence Agency, it is an option by our government and must be taken under these constituted procedures. But our primary role, as I said in the beginning, is to keep people well-informed. I was in considerable controversy in the press some months ago, because we believed our intelligence evidence indicated that the Cubans played a major role in preparing the Kaatangans for a recent invasion in Zaire. Now, here is where intelligence is a difficult profession. I could not disclose every detail of how I came to that position without jeopardizing some of the sources from which I obtained information. I'll tell you ladies and gentlemen that when you feel that what you say in public may be a determinant of the life or death of a man who has been working for our country, you have to be very cautious. So we took a lot of brickbats because some people didn't think our explanations were conclusive. But that was because we couldn't just go out and uncover every detail in a public forum.

Q: When I was in a department of the intelligence community in Washington, I held a view similar to that which you hold: that our intelligence was the best in the world, and that the reasons were very basic. Would you please tell the audience why you think our intelligence better than anyone else's?

A: Yes, as I mentioned in my remarks, we are well ahead in the technical sphere. In general, the sophistication of technology in this country has us ahead and I am confident it will keep us there, that is in collection information by technical means. Collecting information by human means, the Soviets put much, much more effort in this than we do. They have many, many more spies on the street, but I will tell you and I can't explain this in any detail, but I think we are just as good and capable. Finally, the second ingredient I mentioned is interpretation. I have an abiding conviction that in a free society like ours we can do better interpretation, better analysis of the facts as they come in.

Nobody in my organization is worried that if he comes up with an interpretation that is wholly contrary to President Carter's policies, he can't bring it forward. I don't think we can say the same thing in the KGB's sanctums in the Kremlin. They can't have that same free discourse, that same free ability to exchange ideas and interpret. And finally, they do not have in the Soviet Union, which is why I am so grateful for being here today, people who ask questions about what can we do to support you more. We have, here in this country dedicated individuals and groups like these, who are willing to give to our intelligence structure the true support of our entire country whereas, of course, the KGB is a hated organization inside the Soviet Union. These are strengths that are unique to our wonderful, our free country and I hope that I can count in the future on the same kind of support that you obviously evidenced today. I am very grateful for it.

Thank you.